

# Language change

- ◆ Language change is universal
- ◆ Change leads to variation
- ◆ Variation leads to change
- ◆ Media can reinforce change, but may not initiate it
- ◆ Change occurs through face-to-face contact; short-term accommodation leads to long-term adjustment

# Example - seseo

- ◆ Speakers of a northern variety (*distinción*) moving to a *seseísta* area
- ◆ First accommodate speech when speaking with *seseístas*
- ◆ Then begin speaking to each other with *seseo*

# Rate of change

- ◆ The rate of change is variable and depends on several factors
  - Nature of social ties
  - Literacy, standardization
  - Nature of variation
  - Prestige
  - Settlement patterns - old vs. new communities
- ◆ The history of Spain favored rapid change

# Social ties

- ◆ Everyone is connected to many other people - family, community, work, school, worship, ...
- ◆ People who are connected along many different paths are *strong social ties*
- ◆ People connected along one or few paths are *weak social ties*
- ◆ Strong social ties reinforce shared behavior
- ◆ Weak social ties introduce new behaviors

# Social ties and change

- ◆ Language change requires weak social ties
- ◆ Strong social ties resist change
- ◆ A lead person in a group with strong social ties acquires a feature gained through a weak tie - it then spreads through the strong tie group
- ◆ Prestige is the driving force

# Types of prestige

- ◆ Top-down - weak ties with more prestigious groups (power, wealth, education) lead to change (e.g. syllable final /r/ in New York)
- ◆ Bottom-up - weak ties with less prestigious groups, nevertheless have a 'reverse' prestige (e.g. influence of AAVE; s-loss in Madrid)
- ◆ In all cases, change occurs from face-to-face contact (media?), and proceed word by word - often more common words show more change (e.g. hambre)

# Change in Spain

- ◆ Mass re-settlement as a consequence of the reconquest and colonization led to weak social ties
- ◆ Repeated dissolution of northern strong social ties
- ◆ New Town phenomenon - e.g. Madrid, Sevilla, colonial cities
- ◆ Spanish rapid change - more change further south (Cantabria most conservative; Andalucia most innovative)

# Evidence of weak social ties

- ◆ Rejection of Roman Law
- ◆ Less social stratification - few serfs, fewer levels of nobility
- ◆ Adoption of Moorish dress, architecture, customs



# Mechanisms of change

- ◆ Interdialects (Koine)
- ◆ Leveling
- ◆ Simplification
- ◆ Reallocation

# Interdialect

- ◆ Different dialects in contact
- ◆ First a chaotic mixture - several varieties and features in competition
- ◆ Gradually these level into a new dialect that is not the same as any of the contributors - *interdialect* or *koine*

# Dialect leveling

- ◆ Speakers avoid the most obvious dialect differences
- ◆ These features are then lost in the next generation
- ◆ Numeric superiority and simplicity tend to win out; but prestige and founder effects are also factors
- ◆ Spanish phonology and morphology are simpler than other Romance languages as a result of dialect leveling

# Leveling - example

- ◆ Sibilant de-voicing
- ◆ Madrid was a 'new town' in mid-16th century
- ◆ Immigrants from North, with voice merger competing with prestige form from Toledo (no merger)
- ◆ Northerners numerically superior; voice merger resulted in a simpler system; hence, it won out over the more prestigious variety
- ◆ Complete by late 16th century

f > h > ∅

- ◆ f > h began in North - spread to León through face to face contact; to Andalucía through resettlement
- ◆ h > ∅ also began in North
- ◆ In both cases, the less prestigious form won out
- ◆ Again, Madrid's 'new town' phenomenon - what was once a provincialism was now associated with an urban center
- ◆ Leveling favors less marked variety

# b vs. v

- ◆ Originally two phonemes: /b/ and /β/ in North; /b/ and /v/ in South (/v/ found in S. Portuguese and Valencian)
- ◆ Overlapping allophones in North ([b] ~ [β] vs. [β]) - neutralization in medial position
- ◆ Northern variety won out for same reasons as the other cases

# Simplifiction

- ◆ Simpler variant wins out, despite having few speakers
- ◆ Auxiliaries:
  - Habeo ce:nam para:tam
  - - possession; number / gender agreement w / object; transitives only
  - Natus sum
  - - number / gender agreement with subject; only some intransitives and reflexives

# Auxiliaries, continued

- ◆ These developed into a perfect construction - *haber/ser* auxiliary choice
- ◆ By early 16th century, only a few intransitives still used *ser*
- ◆ These eventually disappeared - simplification



# Strong preterites

- ◆ Spanish (like other Romance languages) had a large class of strong (irregular) predicates:
  - *entride* 'I entered', *atrove* 'I dared', *coxe* 'I cooked'
- ◆ These eventually simplified to weak predicates:
  - *entré, atreví, cocí*
- ◆ Only a few remain:
  - *anduve, pude, tuve*

# Reallocation

- ◆ Regional features become social features
- ◆ Example: h-loss - originally a northern feature, became norm in Madrid. Former prestige h-retention eventually became stigmatized
- ◆ Example: s-loss in Madrid - originally an Andalusian feature, spread through working-class Madrid and is now a social feature in Madrid

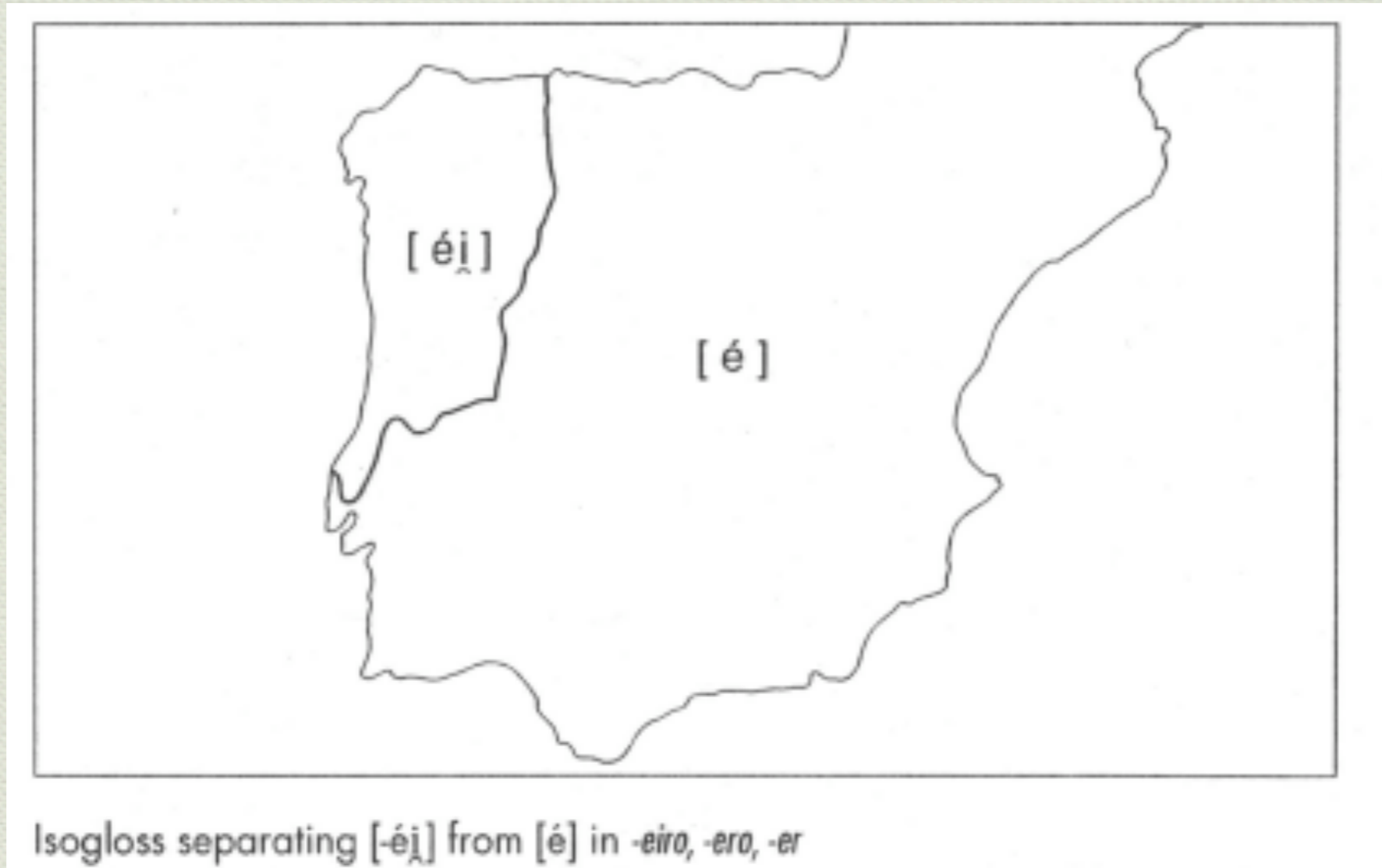
# Waves and isoglosses

- ◆ Waves represent the spread of a feature through face-to-face contact
- ◆ Isoglosses are the out edges of waves
- ◆ Waves emanate from a prestige center - speakers acquire this through weak social ties, imitate it, and pass it along via strong social ties (and perhaps further through other weak ties)

# Direction of change

- ◆ Isoglosses developed by dialectologists do not usually indicate the direction of the change; historical records are needed to fill in the picture.

# [eyr] vs. [ero]



- ◆ Spellings in 12th century Castilian texts suggest [eyro] came first - without these we wouldn't know

# Deducing direction

- ◆ In some cases, the direction of change can be deduced from the isoglosses - when a feature shows up in discontinuous pockets, we can conclude it is the older feature in retreat .

# *cases* vs. *casas*



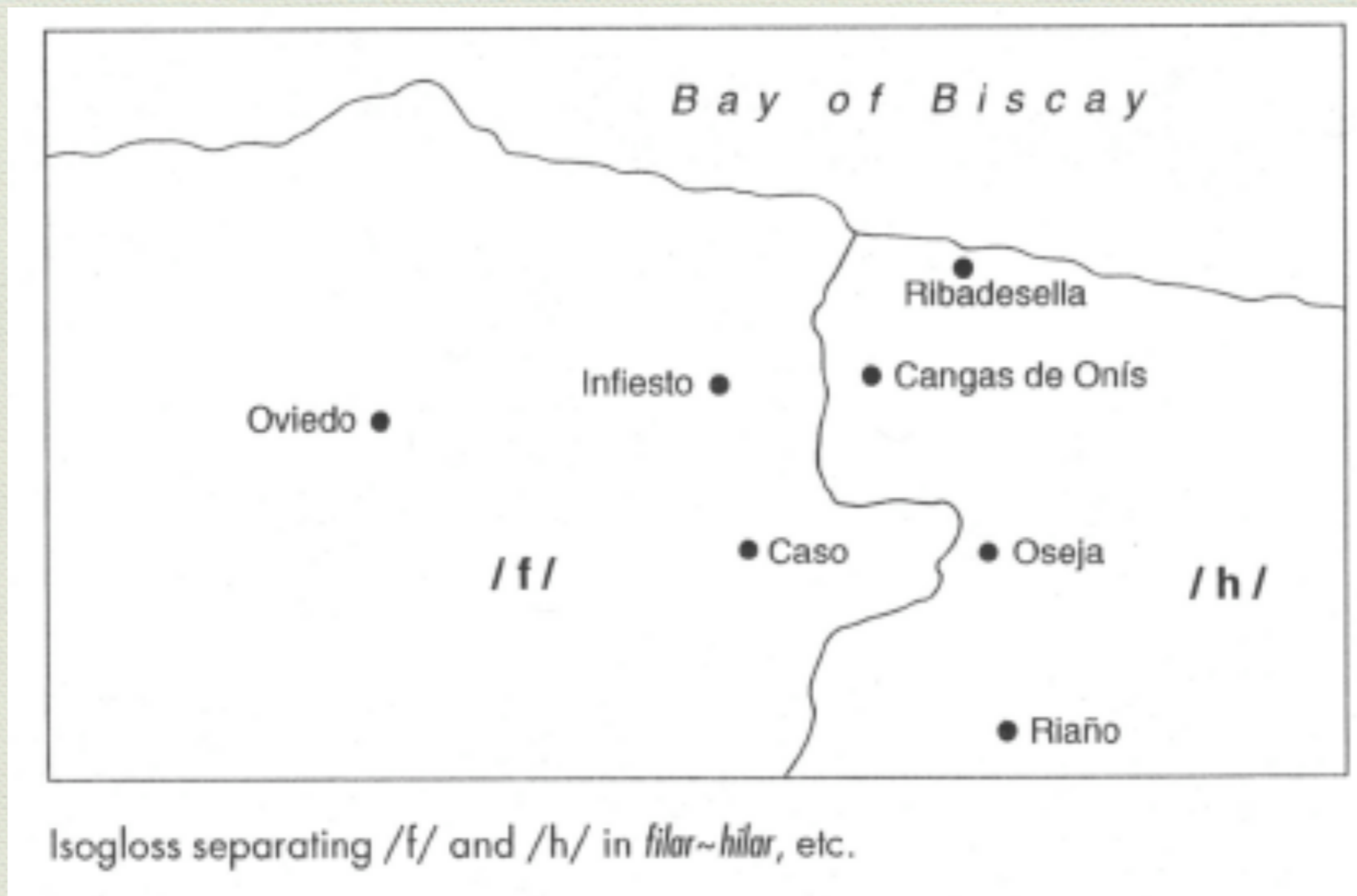
Isogloss demarcating Peninsular zones of *cases* vs *casas*

# Static isoglosses - resettlement

- ◆ [ow] vs. [o] (*pouco* vs. *poco*) and [e] vs. [ye] (*pedra* vs. *piedra*) are distinct in the North
- ◆ In the South they converge around the Portugal/Spain border - this is because of resettlement patterns



# [f] vs. [h] in Asturias



- both are non-standard, hence no reason to shift